

RECKLESS YOUTH! beats the crap outta DEVON STORM! who beats the crap outta ACE DARLING! who... Temporary death of PENTAGON! MALENKOS! vs BRITISH BULLDOGS! and other stuff!

Howdy!

WELCOME TO DEATH VALLEY DRIVER VIDEO REVIEW #47! It was a strange week of wrestling and a sad week also as the horrible news of Plum Mariko's death was released. She was one of the good ones and will be missed. Phil sent me a batch of stuff that I'm FINALLY getting to watch and WRESTLING POWER 97 continues it's hot-streak of supplying an eclectic blend of wrestling from all over the world and unleashing some of the most fabulously goofy jokes on public access.:)

-WRESTLING POWER 97 (8/1/97,8/16/97)

Tim Noel's fabulous Wrestling Power 97 is a cable access wrestling show that is basically a highlight show of the better talent of indie scene mixed in with Japanese and Mexican stuff- a way to educate the rubes like myself. Tim seems to be trying to lure in the LAADIIEES by sporting the shorts that say, "Love me.":p The newly bethrothed Punisher Tommy Rose is there with the ever-not-ready-for-primetime comment after any given news story which ya ain't gonna get on the Big Two or ECW. YEAH BROTHER! These two shows from the last two weeks (a half-hour every two weeks) were two of the best they've done so far. The one from the 8/1/97 is centered around the Steve Williams/Terry Gordy vs Misawa/Kawada final from the Real World Tag Championship of 93 or 94, which is the stiffest thing ever on TV anywhere- to say the least Channel 38. I forget how good Gordy was back then and it's good to see it when Matt "Dave" Classic serves up a baby like this on his Mat Classic segment. Hangman Tim and Dave do the overdubbed commentary (just like Gordon Solie on those tapes you get at seedier video stores, except a suplex is called a suplex on WP97.:)) inserting the youthful enthusiasm of your basic very non-casual fan like these cats are. The indie segment is a Billy Kidman vs Mike Youngblood bout from North Carolina last month. Youngblood is a good young worker and it was more of him than the known quantity that is Kidman in that this is basically the last two minutes of the match. Kidman hits the Shooting Star Press and the Tarheels fans go wild. More of these two already. AND LANCE DIAMOND WILL BE BACK IN SEPTEMBER! AWESOME!!!!!!

The second episode is a TRULY fabulous treatment of a triangle match from New Jack Wrestling from this month with Ace Darling vs Reckless Youth vs Devon Storm for the New Jack Light Heavyweight title. This was one of the better triangle matches you will see. It starts with the soon-to-be-superstar Reckless Youth and Storm taking it to the mat. Since this wasn't on RAW, Storm had time to actually do some wrestling moves. Since this wasn't on Nitro, Storm got to show his expanded mat moves as opposed to jobbing to the shthead Steiners. Reckless Youth is quite the bomb, being even more impressive than when I saw him on the ECWA tape that I yammered about a while back. This was a great five minute segment with each hitting the hard-to-sell-correctly actual rana and then hitting fantabulous head-scissors from varying angles. Darling enters the fray around the five-minute mark with a somersault plancha on the other two. In a surprise, they figured out a way for all three to go at it non-stop without becoming

an endless spotfest, which is what one would expect from NorthEastern Highflying indie wrestlers if you judge by the Big Two matches they have been wrangled into. What they did was have one guy hit a highspot and let the victim sell while the third person hits a move on the one who hit the highspot to begin with. This made up the middle section which moved into the beginning of the end which was basically double teams that broke up quickly into the cutthroat fun that is a good triangle match. The ending was really choice with Storm toprope-hurricanran-ing Darling onto the prone Reckless for the pin and then Darling rolls up Storm in the flash pin at the end. There is WHOLE lot to love in this match as it pays homage to Lucha as much as it pays homage to anything else- very psychologically sound and some of the moves were pretty breathtaking. The only downside is that they felt the urge to use chairs in dopey ECW spots ("HEY! Hold this chair while I do this here moonsault! Thanks!") ECW is a cancer to NE highflyers; you don't need that crap to keep up a cool match, keep it highflying and credible on the mat, which they more than did. Tim and Dave supplied the highly informative commentary- sort of a Tenay treatment without the need to compete against the Brain's next "funny" comment. AW! HONEY HUSH! GET A HOLD A THIS!

-AAA 95; ALL JAPAN VARIOUS THINGS; NEW JAPAN HANDHELD 9/27/94.

I have an odd relationship with Phil. I send him everything I think is good and he sends me everything he thinks is good and we yammer on the phone about it. HEY! WOO-HOO! WHIP ASS! Boy-explain that to the wife when the phone bill gets in! KIXCK ASS! Phil sent me this cool tape with all this stuff on it, all varying from year to year and in length and completeness of card. I had watched the Samurai TV start-up card and spoke of it a while back but failed to mention three things that were on that fat-ass tape- 1.) MEN'S TEIOH is sporting the SWANKEST, MACKINEST, PHATEST mink coat in existence at the Samurai Card MP 10-MAN lost best match of 96, 2.) In the Japan 91 section of the tape- AKIRA TAUE has the WORLD'S FATTEST POMPADOUR and I think I wept...love's... easy... tears... when I saw it, and 3.) the UD vs Naniwa match from the Samurai debut was the best two minutes of wrestling you'll see. The eight minutes after it were bad. Very bad.

The other tape that I hadn't hit on yet has all kind's of... mmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmm.... Swanky goodness. The best thing is the All Japan match between the British Bulldogs (Dynamite with his back in tact and Davey Boy not-quite a stiff yet) versus Joe and Dean Malenko from before 89- when Dynamite Kid's back went out. Me and Phil have a running joke when we get something in like this- I'll say "Hey! Glenn sent me that Kanemoto vs Liger match!" and he'll say, "Is it any good?" And we laugh and laugh! BOY! Anyhoos... This is good! Joe Malenko is as good as his brother, though they both exercised poor judgement in picking out cretin tights (Black and gold with a lightning bolt? HUNH?!?) Dean and DBS are in with each other WAY too much considering that I wanted to see Dynamite vs Dean Malenko but Joe vs Dynamite is just great too. DBS is feeling it as he and Dean do all kinds of cool acrobatic ground stuff and the not-quite-totally roided out Smith is still pretty limber at this point. Joe is kind of a more powerful, less spectacularly quick version of his younger brother and he looks like the lost cool wrestler of the 80's in this match. Dynamite was deeply into being an absolute bastard by this point in his career that he and Dean don't go as well as the elder, stiffer-working Malenko,

so, in retrospect, the match-up to watch was Dynamite vs Joe with Dean and DBS killing time in between. Talk about guys who can take it to the mat- this is a fucking clinic. Get a hold of this.

Also an ALL JAPAN oldies match was Ted DiBiase vs Bruiser Brodie from before 87, when Mr Goodish was stabbed to death in Puerto Rico, thus setting up the most tasteless angle in FMW history. This wasn't as good as one would expect from such a heady pairing of DiBiase- arguably the greatest American worker of his time- against Bruiser Brodie- arguably the greatest worker of his time. This was WAY too much of a World Class Brodie match with DiBiase playing the babyface that sells a whole lot and Brodie playing the mindless psychotic heel. It has its moments but is too basic of a story for these two to be telling, considering the breadth and width of the combined body of work these two have behind them at this point. I dunno- nothing too cool, no hot sequences, no build-up to anything. I was expecting more.

From the AAA promotion in Mexico, I watched the match where Pentagon dies in the ring- from an overabundance of recreational substances I believe was the story that was circulating. I'm assuming that since Pentagon was revived in the back that that was the reason that this match saw the light of day or at least the light of Galavision. It wasn't totally devoid of taste, in that there was no mention of LaParka using an oriental spike or anything. The weird thing about this match (other than the second best worker being temporarily dead) is that LaParka, Fishman, Psicosis, Octagon and Ultimo Dragon continue despite the fact that LaParka would HAVE to be totally freaked out, since he is the one who delivers the backdrop and then notices that something is very wrong with the former Negro Santo. Luchadores are pros beyond the realm of pros There is, of course, four replays of it during and after the match. Go Figure. Don't do drugs, kids.

The biggest part of the tape is a 1994 New Japan handheld that has a one-day tournament for the IWGP Jr Heavyweight title. I don't know the story on it. I'm trying to remember when Liger broke his leg because that that would facilitate this baby. This deal was pretty great. The highlight is the final between Chris Benoit and Norio Honaga and the CHOICE match between Black "Eddy" Tiger and Benoit. Benoit and Guerrero go at it like wrestling machines, hitting everything stiffer, faster and cleaner than anybody in the world. People forget that Eddy Guerrero is a great, great freakin wrestler and that his matches with Benoit are some of the best things you can see. The Honaga vs Benoit matches is the trifecta of the tournament- as I believe it was called the "Honaga-Pins-Your-Favorites" Junior Heavyweight Tournament- as Benoit is a crazed bitch beating the crud out of everybody but Honaga getting to pin everybody in the end (including a young cat named Shinjiro Ohtani). Benoit was a different wrestler in 1994- stiffer but less sure of his identity in the ring. He doesn't ever look like he is at ease with his work like he is now, which is obvious when he is in with guys who can work nowadays, in that he is much smoother and deliberate and doesn't seem aloof to the crowd like he was back then. I dunno- Benoit is improved past this point in everything but actual workrate- which has been about the same when he is in with somebody who can go. HEY! I'll be the nine zillionth person to say it- Benoit is the most complete North American wrestler of our generation. The matches between tourney matches were harrowing at times. EL GIGANTE! ABE FREAKIN

VAGODA! IT'S EL GIGANTE! Against Scott Norton. Poor Scott had to sell El Gigante's shitty clawhold. What a dream! I live in fear.....

NEXT WEEK: WRESTLING! WRESTLING! WRESTLING!

NANIWA~!

Dean Rasmussen, Who loved Plum Mariko since Dream Slam II.